11. (Not Amended Herein) The image forming process according to claim 9, wherein a coloring material of the ink is a pigment.

12. (Not Amended Herein) A process for the preparation of a recording medium comprising the steps of:

applying to a substrate a coating liquid comprising pigment particles and thermoplastic resin particles;

forming an ink-receiving layer by fusing and adhering the thermoplastic resin with heat under pressure; and

fusing the thermoplastic resin particles and the substrate.

13. (Not Amended Herein) The process for the preparation of a recording medium according to claim 12 comprising further the step of:

forming an outermost layer, after the ink-receiving layer has been provided.

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 1-13 are pending in this application. Claims 6-13 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claim 1 has been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention, in terms which distinguish over the art of record.

Claim 1 is the only independent claim currently under consideration.

Claims 1-5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over Japanese Patent Document JP 57-000784 (Yasujima et al. '784). With regard to the claims as amended by this amendment, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1 as amended by this amendment is directed to a recording medium provided with an ink-receiving layer on at least one surface of a substrate. The ink-receiving layer is composed of a porous layer having pigment particles and thermoplastic resin particles that have been mutually fused with no particle structure left. The ink-receiving layer and the substrate are fused. The ink-receiving layer has gaps formed by the fusion of the thermoplastic resin particles.

Claim 1 has been amended herein to more distinctly recite and specifically claim the particular features of the present invention related to gaps formed in an ink-receiving layer by the fusion of thermoplastic resin particles. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification at least at page 10, lines 15-20. It is submitted that no new matter has been added by the amendments herein.

In Applicants' view, Yasujima et al. '784 discloses an information recording card in which an ink-absorbing layer that absorbs and retains ink for information recording is provided on a card base. A lubricious layer through which the ink can pass and which prevents stains is applied on the ink-absorbing layer.

According to the invention of Claim 1 as amended by this amendment, an ink-receiving layer on the surface of a substrate is formed of pigment particles and thermoplastic

resin particles. The thermoplastic particles have been mutually fused with no particle structure left. Gaps in the ink-receiving layer are formed by the fusion of the thermoplastic resin particles. Advantageously, the pigment ink entering into the gaps formed by the fusion of the thermoplastic resin particles substantially improves the friction resistance of images on the card.

Yasujima et al. '784 may teach an information recording card with an ink absorbing layer on a support and a lubricious layer over the ink absorbing layer through which ink can pass. As disclosed from line 1 of page 6 to line 15 of page 7 in Yasujima et al. '784, the ink-absorbing layer is formed by applying a coating solution containing particles, resin that disperses and binds the particles and an organic solvent that dissolves the resin. The coating is then dried. The resin in Yasujima et al. '784 functions to disperse and bind the coating solution particles evenly.

Yasujima et al. '784, however, is devoid of any suggestion of the ink absorbing layer having gaps formed by fusion of the thermoplastic resin particles as in Claim 1. Accordingly, it is not seen that Yasujima et al. '784 wherein a resin in the ink absorbing layer disperses and bonds particles evenly and is dissolved by an organic solvent could possibly suggest the feature of Claim 1 of gaps being formed in an ink-receiving layer by fusion of thermoplastic particles whereby friction resistance of an image is substantially improved. Applicants conclude that the cited reference does not teach or suggest the invention of Claim 1. It is therefore believed that Claim 1 as amended by this amendment is completely distinguished from Yasujima et al. '784 and is allowable.

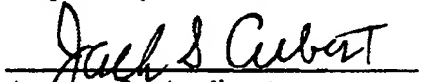
In Applicants' view, the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claim 1. The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable for the same reasons as their respective independent claims and because they set forth additional features of the present invention that further distinguish them over the cited art. Separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

Withdrawal of the Section 103 rejection and rejoinder of withdrawn Claims 6-13 are respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' attorney, Jean K. Dudek, may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicants
Jack S. Cubert
Registration No. 24,245

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES TO CLAIMS

1. (Three Times Amended) A recording medium provided with an ink-receiving layer on at least one surface of a substrate, wherein said ink-receiving layer is composed of a porous layer comprising pigment particles and [mutually fused] thermoplastic resin particles that have been mutually fused with no particle structure left, and wherein the [thermoplastic resin particles] ink-receiving layer and the substrate are fused, and the ink receiving layer has gaps formed by the fusion of the thermoplastic resin particles.

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